

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. BA 2770

Magi No. 0327705304

DOE ☐ yes ☒ no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Benson House

and/or common Barry House or Fox Run

2. Location

street & number 16308 Falls Road ☐ not for publication

city, town Upperco ☐ vicinity of Councilmanic District 3rd
congressional district 2nd

state Maryland county Baltimore Co.

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Harry J. Barry & Gloria J. Barry

street & number 16308 Falls Road telephone no.: (410) 771-4144

city, town Upperco state and zip code MD 21155

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Courts Building EHK JR
liber 5366

street & number 401 Bosley Avenue folio 564

city, town Towson state MD 21204

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title No prior study

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Registration Form: include in this title block the
property name, county, and site/inventory number

Multiple Property Documentation Form: include the
name of the multiple property listing

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7. Description

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Condition

☒ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

At first glance the Benson-Barry House look like a Georgian Revival dwelling from the 1920s or 1930s, but its basement shows the antiquity of the building. The house is of brick, L-shaped in footprint, with a center-hall floor plan, two stories, set on a high basement, perched on a hillside fairly close to Falls Road. The main facade is three bays wide. The north end of the main block has an almost blank wall in the Maryland-Pennsylvania German tradition; this wall has two small square windows in the attic on either side of the inside end-chimney. The house is set high on its Butler quartzite foundation which is punctuated by some small windows. High basements were another traditional German building technique. Inside, there is a replacement fireplace in the north (or living) room; the house was probably built in the age of fireplace heating. The straight stairway is typical of a solid country house and its railing is anchored by a massive newell post, probably of oak. The cellar is the guarantee of antiquity because the joists supporting the first floor are half logs with an occasional flake of bark still attached. These are the largest logs this site surveyor has even seen in county houses: probably made from logs one foot in diameter with many knots left in place with all sorts of gouged-out indentations and adze marks. The wood is a rich shade of reddish brown.

The grounds of this house adjoined working farms when the Barrys moved there 25 years ago. To the south of the house is a miniature valley with lush grass, tree borders, and elegant plantings of evergreens in Oriental style accented by beds of annuals in contrasting hues.

Some 1.2 miles to the south is another German-style brick house perched on a roadside bank; it too has blank end walls, and raises the possibility that some local master builder of the pre-1850 period did both the Cole House and the Benson-Barry House.

8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
— prehistoric	— archeology-prehistoric	— community planning	— landscape architecture	— religion
— 1400-1499	— archeology-historic	— conservation	— law	— science
— 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	— economics	— literature	— sculpture
— 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	— education	— military	— social/
— 1700-1799	— art	— engineering	— music	— humani
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	— commerce	— exploration/settlement	— philosophy	— theater
— 1900-	— communications	— industry	— politics/government	— transportation
		— invention		— other (specify)

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
and/orApplicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ GLevel of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☐ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The present Barry House goes back through many owners and was apparently the main house of the Benson family who owned Benson's Mill on the opposite side of the Falls Road about 0.55 mile away. Mordecai Benson bought the mill in 1805. (1)

The first Benson we have found in the chain of title for this house was James Benson, who already owned 119 acres of the tracts "Addition to Amos's Venture Resurveyed" and "Springfield Enlarged" when he sold to Elijah Benson on March 23, 1831. (2)

James Benson had also appeared in the 1823 tax list of Old District 7 with:

Springfield Enlarged	280 acres	\$40 of improvement.
Adreons Hills	75	\$40
Chestnut Ridge	160	\$250 Gristmill
Spindlers Chance		\$30 Sawmill (3)

But the Bensons were not in the 1798 tax list of North Hundred, and at that time the mill belonged to Jacob Lemmon. We are not sure who owned the house site in 1798, but the Lemmon property contained only log dwellings.

The house of interest in this report appears as "Mrs. Benson's" on Sidney and Browne's county map published in 1850. In 1867, Mrs. Margaret Benson, widow of Elijah Benson, sold 119 acres of Addition to Amos's Venture Resurveyed and Springfield Enlarged to her son Melchor F. Benson, who paid \$3,000 to the widow and several other heirs. (4) Neither Elijah Benson nor Melchor F. Benson ever owned or operated the mill.

Ten years later, the 1877 G. M. Hopkins atlas showed a house at the Falls Road location owned by Melchor F. Benson. The same publication also showed that Benson was an atlas patron. He

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gave his address as Butler, his profession as farmer, his land holdings as 117 acres, and his birthplace as Baltimore County, 1832. (5)

In 1911, Sallie W. Benson sold the same property to Augustus L. Hunt. (6) George Hunt was shown as owner or occupant in the 1915 Bromley atlas, Plate 40. In 1917, Augustus L. Hunt sold the same tracts to James E. Bosley (7) for \$4250. Bosley held it eleven years, selling to three members of the Benson family in 1928. The second wave of Bensons sold in 1941 to C. Ernest LeBarrar and wife.

Several short-term owners held this property until 1972, when the farm was acquired by Benson Mill Associates. (8) A one-year owner was Morris A. Mechanic of theatre fame. The Benson Mill Associates sold the old family house to the present owners, Harry J. and Gloria J. Barry on June 11, 1973. (9)

NOTES:

1. Baltimore County Deeds, AWB 413:422, Hall of Records.
2. Baltimore County Deeds, WPC 475:511. (We have not followed this title into the Hall of Records).
3. Assessment, Old District 7, Hall of Records, film No. CR 39,605-5.
4. Assessors Field Book, District No. 5, Hall of Records No. 8247.
5. Baltimore County Deeds, JHL 52:314. The placename at the mill was "Berean," its origin unknown.
6. Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland (Philadelphia, 1877), atlas patron list, District 5.
7. Baltimore County Deeds, WPC 475:509.
8. Baltimore County Deeds, WPC 475:511.
9. Baltimore County Deeds, EHK JR. 5347:155.
10. Baltimore County Deeds, EHK JR. 5366:564.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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No prior study

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 4.1533Quadrangle name HampsteadQuadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A	Zone	Easting	Northing
C			
E			
G			

B	Zone	Easting	Northing
D			
F			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

See "Benson Mill Estates," Lot 4, Plat Book EHK JR. 37, folio 77.
Tax Map 26, Parcel P163.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
None			

state	code	county	code
None			

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	John McGrain	date	D September 6, 1996
organization	Office of Planning	telephone	(410) 887-3495
street & number	401 Bosley Avenue	state	MD 21204
city or town	Towson		

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.